

From the Editors

Australian environments that are presently subject to a range of threats such as renewed grazing, the impacts of rampant urban development and increased erosion now have an additional threat. Following the handing down of the Federal Budget in May, conservation programs and research projects are in danger of being slashed through reductions in funding and withdrawal of personnel.

Research in the natural sciences is heavily dependent on government funding, and can scarcely afford to have budgets reduced; however, in excess of \$400 million is planned to be cut from the budget of CSIRO. A similar sum is to be taken from land care agencies. By one account, at least \$2 billion in cuts will be made through abolishing programs and scrapping environmental agencies.

In a world facing the effects of global warming, research within the natural sciences is of vital importance. The results of such research, reported in this and many other journals, assume a greater importance from the urgency of its need. We can ill afford to cease studying the impacts on flora and fauna of ever-changing natural environments. Rather than being curtailed in the way the budget requires, such research should be the subject of increased funding. Indeed, our world depends on it.

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Registered Office: FNCV, 1 Gardenia Street, Blackburn, Victoria 3130, Australia.

Postal Address: FNCV, PO Box 13, Blackburn, Victoria 3130, Australia.

Phone/Fax (03) 9877 9860; International Phone/Fax 61 3 9877 9860.

email: admin@fncv.org.au

www.fncv.org.au

Address correspondence to:

The Editors, *The Victorian Naturalist*, PO Box 13, Blackburn, Victoria 3130, Australia.

Phone: (03) 9877 9860. Email: vicnat@fncv.org.au

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FNCV, PO Box 13, Blackburn, Victoria 3130, Australia

(N.B. New postal address)

Phone 61 3 9877 9860. Fax 61 3 9877 9862. Email: admin@fncv.org.au